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ABSTRACT

The number of persons confined to correctional institutions continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. Some of the factors contributing to this growth include an increase in the 18- to 25-year-old population, a tougher stance on crime resulting in more prison sentences, longer sentences because younger offenders commit more violent crimes, and more severe sentences for some types of offenders. Education is offered by about 90 percent of correctional institutions, but only about 5 percent of inmates are enrolled in vocational education programs, although 50 percent could benefit from them. Despite its limited availability, vocational education has a long tradition in correctional facilities and is considered to have great potential. However, provision of vocational education is hampered by lack of funding, inadequate number of programs, outmoded equipment and materials, and limited space. Some studies have documented positive relationships between inmates' participation in vocational education and employment upon release. A newer issue is provision of vocational education to female inmates, a population that has increased 158 percent in the past 10 years. Female inmates have typically had training only in traditional service occupations; female inmates have sued for more opportunities for vocational education in nontraditional fields. (This fact sheet lists resources that provide information about correctional vocational education. Included are annotations of 14 print resources and a list of 5 organizations that can provide more information.) (KC)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN CORRECTIONS

The number of individuals confined to corrections institutions continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. During the past decade the number of inmates doubled in part because of the following factors:

- o There was more crime due to the large increase in the number of 18 to 25 year olds in the population, the most crime-prone ages.
- o A tougher stance on punishment meant that more criminals were sentenced to prison.
- o Because younger criminals commit more violent crimes, the sentences tended to be for longer terms.
- o More severe sentences were handed out for certain types of offenders (i.e., violent, repeat, and drug).

Education is one of six services offered by most corrections institutions; in fact, about 90 percent of them have educational programs. However, because access to these programs is frequently limited, only about 5 percent of inmates are enrolled in some type of vocational education program despite the fact that as many as 50 percent could probably benefit from them.

Despite its limited availability, vocational education has a long tradition in correctional facilities and is considered by many to have great potential for producing positive results. However, some problems associated with providing vocational education in corrections include lack of funding and difficult access to funding, inadequate number of programs and program slots, inadequate and outmoded equipment and materials, and inadequate space.

Two issues associated with vocational education in corrections are its relationship to recidivism rates and its availability to female inmates. Because a number of problems impede the validity and reliability of vocational education research in the prison environment, it has been difficult to demonstrate that participation in vocational education reduces recidivism rates. However, there have been studies that have documented positive relationships between inmates' participation in vocational education and subsequent employment upon release. According to Halasz (1988), "it seems appropriate to continue to study the relationship among education, employment, and recidivism based on the assumption that education leads to employment and employment can lead to successful reintegration into society" (p. 71).

The number of female inmates has increased 158 percent in the last 10 years; consequently, more than half of the states have been sued to provide women with services equal to those provided to male inmates. One area of contention in these suits has been the type of vocational education programs available to women. Female inmates have typically

only had available vocational education programs in the traditional service occupations of sewing, food service, housekeeping, and nurses' aides.

Corrections institutions have argued that it is not cost effective to provide nontraditional vocational programs because there are relatively few women interested in attaining such skills. However, equal vocational education for female inmates has emerged as a major legal issue due to the 14th Amendment Equal Protection Clause and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. More institutions are now providing females equal vocational programs.

A number of factors have combined to create a greater need for vocational education programs in correctional institutions. The following resources provide information about this topic. Included are print resources as well as organizations that can be consulted for additional information. (This overview is based on Halasz 1988.)

Print Resources

Dollar, E. M. "Keeping Them from Coming Back to Prison in Oklahoma." *Vocational Education Journal* 63, no. 1 (January-February 1988): 29-30. (ERIC No. EJ 364 482).

A program at the Lexington Training Center in Oklahoma that has a 16 percent recidivism rate compared to 55 percent overall is described.

Downes, E. A.; Monaco, K. R.; and Schreiber, S. O. "Evaluating the Effects of Vocational Education on Inmates: A Research Model and Preliminary Results." In *Yearbook of Correctional Education 1989*, edited by S. Duguid. Laurel, MD: Correctional Education Association; Burnaby, BC: Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, 1989. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 308 346).

This chapter describes the development and pilot testing of a research model that will be used for a long-term follow-up study on ex-inmates who have completed vocational training during their incarceration.

Faddis, C. R.; Goff, S. J.; and Long, J. P. *Funding Vocational Education in a Corrections Setting*. Columbus: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, December 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 809).

Assists corrections administrators in the task of securing funding for vocational education programs, especially through preparing and submitting applications for grants.

Halasz, I. M. "Evaluating Vocational Education Programs in Correctional Institutions." *Journal of Correctional*

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Education 33, no. 4 (December 1982): 7-10. (ERIC No. EJ 279 056).

Discusses eight steps for evaluating vocational education programs in correctional institutions.

Halasz, I. M. "Education behind Bars: Focus on Vocational Education for Inmates." In *Vocational Special Needs Learners: Five Years of Research and Development*, edited by J. K. Ciccone and J. E. Friedenberg. Columbus: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, December 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 673).

This chapter provides a review and synthesis of the last 5 years of the literature related to vocational education in the corrections system.

Hassell, L. W. "Keeping Them from Coming Back to Prison in Arkansas." *Vocational Education Journal* 63, no. 1 (January-February 1988): 28-29, 77. (ERIC No. EJ 364 481).

Only 7.5 percent of those who receive vocational training return to an Arkansas prison after release compared to 30.8 percent overall.

Krogstad, R. E. "An Open-Ended Cycle System in Vocational Education." *Journal of Correctional Education* 38, no. 1 (March 1987): 8-10. (ERIC No. EJ 350 316).

The open-ended, competency-based vocational programming used at the Maryland Correctional Training Center is described.

Learn, R. L. "Incorporating Employability Skills into the Vocational Classroom." Paper presented at the Pennsylvania Statewide Corrections Education Inservice (Camp Hill, PA, August 10-12, 1988). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 297 124).

Describes a process of incorporating employability skills directly into the curriculum in the vocational corrections classroom.

Nelson, O.; Lee, H.; and Gilbertson, A. *Corrections Education Evaluation System Project. Site Visit Report*. Menomonie: Center for Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, University of Wisconsin-Stout, July 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 308 223).

Reports on results of site visits to five correctional institutions in Wisconsin conducted as part of the development of an evaluation model for the competency-based vocational education project for the Wisconsin Correctional System.

Norton, L.; Ciccone, J. K.; and Littlefield, J. F. *Improving Vocational Programs for Female Inmates: A Comprehensive Approach to Quality Programs*. Columbus: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 863).

Provides guidelines and support to aid corrections administrators in improving the quality and quantity of vocational education programs offered at their institutions for female inmates.

Platt, J. S. "Vocational Education in Corrections: A Piece of a Bigger Pie." *Remedial and Special Education* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1986): 48-55. (ERIC No. EJ 337 566).

Discusses the need for vocational programs in corrections to develop relationships with a variety of personnel within the institution and the community.

Simms, B. E.; Farley, J.; and Littlefield, J. F. *Colleges with Fences: A Handbook for Correctional Education Program Improvement*. Columbus: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 982).

Based on a study of exemplary characteristics and practices of postsecondary vocational programs in correctional institutions, this handbook is intended to assist correctional educators in improving programs for incarcerated persons.

Whitehead, V.; Munch, L.; and Griffin, T. *Transitions: Vocational Education from Jail to Community. Final Report*. Springfield: Department of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education, Illinois State Board of Education, June 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 287 098).

Describes a project conducted to help prison inmates in Will County, Illinois, make an effective transition to employment in the community.

Zumpetta, A. W. "Full-Time Vocational Training in Corrections: Measuring Effectiveness vs. Appearance." *Journal of Correctional Education* 39, no. 3 (September 1988): 130-133. (ERIC No. EJ 375 797).

Describes a study to measure the impressions of full-time vocational students who were incarcerated at the time of their training.

Resource Organizations

American Correctional Association, 4321 Hartwick Road, Suite L208, College Park, MD 20740 (301/699-7600).

Association on Programs for Female Offenders, Georgia Department of Corrections, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Atlanta, GA 30334 (404/656-4593).

Correctional Education Association, 8025 Laurel Lakes Court, Laurel, MD 20707 (301/490-1440).

National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies, 36 Locksley Lane, Springfield, IL 62704 (217/787-0690).

National Institute of Corrections/National Academy of Corrections, 1790 30th Street, Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301 (303/939-8855, 303/444-1101).

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